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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted to identify Bible references useful to adult reading teachers in special educational settings. Bible references to reading were first identified by analyzing papers written by education students on the Bible and the teaching of reading. From these papers, 49 key words relating to reading found in the Bible were identified. Using a computerized text of the King James version, those reading-related words, when entered on the computer, generated about 4,800 passages. A reference list was selected from those passages considered to have substantial relevance to reading instruction and was organized under topic headings familiar to reading teachers, such as understanding, reading difficulty, and effects of reading. The language section included concepts best considered in a religious framework. The need for readers to be guided, given sense, and caused to understand reading is supported by several passages under reading purposes and promises, and interested teachers will also find copious evidence of use of reading as a teaching device in the life of Christ. Some of the passages generated in the study were less important but familiar in their interest in education. More significant were references emphasizing the importance of reading. The study raised the question of whether other prominent religious documents are as supportive of the teaching of reading as the Bible. (The reference list of Bible passages and their headings is attached.) (HTH)

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Bible References By Computer for Adult Reading Teachers

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Bible References by Computer for Adult Reading Teachers

Reading research acknowledges the widespread readership of the Bible (Gallup, 1981) and its use in many adult literacy programs. For example, the Laubach literacy organization, the Mormon Church, and others combine volunteer tutoring methods and religious reading materials to teach large numbers of adults how to read on an international basis. Some of these religious affiliated literacy programs have extensive publications, training programs, national organizations, and conduct reading research.

Reading surveys also acknowledge the role of religious needs in motivating reading and reading instruction for adults. For example, studies of reasons of why people read (Staiger, 1979) and enroll in adult basic education programs (Bowren and Zintz, 1977) indicate the relationship between personal religious needs, reading, and desire for reading instruction.

The purpose of the study was to identify Bible references useful to adult reading teachers in special educational settings. The study recognizes separation of church and state in public education. There are evident problems using religious materials in public, tax supported educational programs. The study was undertaken, however, in recognition of the religious context in which many adult literacy programs operate. It also recognizes various interests in the Bible, whatever they may be, of many teachers, adult reading students, and other professionals in reading.

Method

Bible references to reading were first identified by analyzing education student papers written on the Bible and the teaching of reading. From these papers and a concordance (Strong, 1980), 49 key words relating to reading found in the Bible were identified such as "read", "study", "book", "language",

"word", "records", etc. Using a computerized text of the King James Version, those reading related words when entered on the computer, generated about 4800 passages.

A reference list was selected from those passages which were considered to have a substantial relevance to the teaching of reading. The list was organized under topic headings familiar to reading teachers. Content and language of the selected references is to some degree influenced by the 17th Century language usage and biases of the King James translators. Some references on the list are included under more than one heading.

Overview of Topic Headings

Biblical terms, with some effort and imagination, can be related to the vocabulary of reading educators. For example, the Biblical term "understanding" is the most closely related word to what most teachers call reading comprehension. An overview of listed references suggests dimensions of comprehension not considered in common current discussions of organization of text, schema theory, or lists of comprehension skills such as the Barrett taxonomy (Barrett, 1968).

The "Reading Difficulty" section denotes barriers to comprehension, especially to interpretation and belief. It recognizes some passages are "hard to be understood" (2 Pe 3:16) and reminds teachers of problems of bias, critical reading, and readiness to learn. This is further considered in the "Readiness" section where preparation and qualifications to read differ markedly from the checklists in most reading methods textbooks.

For historians or those who like a good story, references under the topic "Effects of Reading" are recommended. Israelite Kings were expected

to read daily and see that their subjects were orally read to, every seven years. Some kings did and some didn't. The experiences of King Josiah (2 Ch 34:18-33; 2 Ki 23:1-25; 2 Ki 22:8-20) who dramatically responded to the reading of the law and Ezra's efforts to educate his group (Ne 8:1-18) are noteworthy in this regard.

The language section includes concepts that are best considered in a religious framework. Cognitive concerns and events described, such as Babel and Pentecost, have few parallels in teaching activity or personal experience. However, one intriguing reference (Zep 3:9) to a "pure language" whets the curiosity. One wonders what language characteristics Zephaniah had in mind and whether they might make reading teachers obsolete!

More reassuring, however, are the references under the teacher heading. The need for readers to be guided and given "the sense and caused to understand the reading" (Ne 8:8) is supported. Also, ". . . understandest thou what thou readest? And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me?" (Ac 8:30-31). Parent instructional concerns in reading are similarly supported. "And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and thou shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house and when thou walkest by the way and when thou liest down and when thou risest up" (De 6:7). Teaching might then follow common and familiar principles stated as "precept upon precept; line upon line . . . here a little, and there a little" (Isa 28:10) or by giving "milk" before "meat" (Heb 5:12-14) in terms of difficulty and developmental learning.

Interested teachers will also find copious evidence of use of reading as a teaching device in the life of Christ. His discussion approach repeatedly called direct attention to reading familiar to both followers and critics. Subjects such as sabbath observance (Lu 6:3), divorce (Mt 19:7), and resur-

rection (Mt 22:31) among others were discussed in the context of older and well known written information on the same subjects. Rebuttals to his questioning critics were reprimands for their intentions or lack of knowledge about their own historical and religious literature. "Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures . . ." (Mt 22:29). Apparently they weren't up on their reading, didn't understand it, or failed to see its relevance. Interesting also is his detailed knowledge of the Old Testament writings, knowledge that according to the account, became a carefully followed quide for his own life (Lu 24:44). Consider also, the many listed references to his statements which are repeated in modern reading classrooms: "have ye not read" (Mt 12:3), "whoso readeth, let him understand" (Mt 24:15), or "how readest thou?" (Lu 10:26). The wording may not be precisely the same but the concerns they tap are basic to all reading instruction.

Writers and readability experts can find support in the oft repeated instruction to write "very plainly" (De 27:8), take dictation when necessary (Jer 36:17-18), rewrite (Jer 36:32), and receive some sympathy for the unpublished (Job 19:23-24). Similarly, for authors who don't like suggested manuscript revisions, they, like Pilate, can respond "What I have written I have written" (Joh 19:22).

For teachers with research and publication responsibilities, there are many passages to consider. For example, if trying to keep up with 1300 published reading studies a year is discouraging, some solace is offered in "of making many books there is no end; and much study is a weariness of the flesh" (Ec 12:12) or "ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth" (2 Ti 3:7), and worse yet, "For in much wisdom is much grief: and he that increaseth knowledge, increaseth sorrow" (Ec 1:18). On the other hand, on their good days, researchers might find meaning in "But let every

man prove his own work . . ." (Ga 6:4) or better, "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (1 Th 5:21). For researchers, or vengeful reviewers hunting for documentation of points of view contrary to their own "Oh . . . that mine adversary had written a book" (Job 31:35) may help. Finally, ". . . publish, and set up a standard; publish, and conceal not . . ." (Jer 50:2). Or again, "Oh that my words were now written! Oh that they were printed in a book!" (Job 19:23-24). Such bemoaning and advice is well known among aspiring faculty and university promotion committees at tenure time.

For biblical writers, book burning and censorship in some situations were justified (Ac 19:19) and others not (Jer 36:22-32). Some writings were not valued (1 Ti 1:4), others were. For example, for some people of the Old Testament, the inclusion or deletion of one's name in certain books determined their occupation (Ezr 2:62, Ne 7:63-64) or for others was a matter of life or death (Re 20:15, Da 12:1, De 29:20). Unauthorized altering of certain written materials was also a serious crime with serious penalties (De 4:2, Re 22:18-19). "Also I have made a decree, and whosever shall alter this word, let him be hanged thereon; and let his house be made a dunghill for this" (Ezr 6:11). Penalties for violations of copyright laws, defacing library books, or plagiarism in Freshman English seem mild by comparison.

Some Bible passages related to reading are less important but familiar in their education interest. For example, Zerubbabel had to use a federal grant to accomplish his work within budget (Ezr 3:7). King Ahasuerus' conjugal problems brought about a government publication that might offend some 20th Century women and most publishers (Es 1:12, 20, 22). Both Ezekiel (Eze 3:1-2) and John (Re 10:10) spoke of eating certain books, a figure of speech probably understood by their Israelite audiences but more difficult

for casual modern readers. And for those that work with publishing companies and read passages out of context, Psalm 68:11 and Mark 7:36 will stimulate at least a smile if not a downright chuckle.

More significant are references emphasizing the important of reading. Besides requirements of the Kings to read and the people to be read to, certain books were venerated and were part of religious ceremony (Heb 9:19-20). They were maintained in important places (De 31:26) with the most valued objects in society. Israelite society itself was in fact organized from books "So all Israel were reckoned by genealogies; and, behold, they were written in the book of the kings of Israel and Judah . . ." (1 Ch 9:1). Furthermore, value was attributed to the written word as a means of preserving things of importance "Now go . . . and note it in a book, that it may be for the time to come for ever and ever" (Isa 30:8). Even the deceased were to be held accountable for the books recording events of their mortal lives (Re 20:12). For the living, other records were significant, "Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name" (Mal 3:16). No wonder that people were told to "give attendance to reading" (1 Ti 4:13) or personally encouraged by their leaders. "Blessed is he that readeth . . . and keep those things which are written therein" (Re 1:3). King Josiah who read the Book of the Covenant to "all the people, both small and great" is commended with the greatest of commendations, "and like unto him, was there no king before him . . . neither after him arose there any like him" (2 Ki 23:2, 25). One New Testament group was especially praised because they "searched the scriptures daily" and were therefore "more noble than those at Thessolonica" (Ac 17:11).

Reading purposes receive much Biblical attention. The list is not the same as those of education textbooks but it is not totally unfamiliar. Hope, reproof, doctrine, correction, instruction, wisdom, counsel, knowledge, prosperity, memory, joy, exhortation, belief and discernment are among those mentioned in the list under that heading. It would not be difficult to find these words, or their close counterparts in many reading or teacher training classrooms. Their relevance to bibliotherapy, a well known psychological and educational practice, is evident.

For motivation in a religious context, two Old Testament references, both given to Israelite leaders, are particularly forceful. Note the promises offered and incidentally the flow of the King James English.

> "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success." (Jos 1:8)
>
> "And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life: that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them: That his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment, to the right hand, or to the left; to the end that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he, and his children, in the midst of Israel." (De 17:19-20)

Whatever the interest in the Bible as a source of literature, history, and religious belief, or even myth, fable and delusion, there is much within it relevant to reading. Further discussion, annotations of the list, and other references are left to individual preference.

For the interested, however, the list can provide a point of departure, if not one of complete agreement.

On reflection, one wonders if other prominent religious documents are as supportive of the teaching of reading as the Bible. It is generally accepted by reading professionals that such religious books are powerful motivators to many desiring reading instruction. In fact, for some adults, reading religious literature *is* the primary reason for trying to learn or improve reading skills. For such students, teachers using an occasional Bible passage to support an instructional goal may find help from this or similar reference lists. In appropriate educational settings where allusions to religion are acceptable, such a practice may enhance motivation and encourage learning. Relating instruction to the learner's background in this manner can help both teachers and students obtain their goals in reading.

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BIBLE REFERENCES FOR READING TEACHERS

Reading Teachers

Ne 8:8
Ac 8:30-31
De 6:1-2,6-7
Ex 24:12
Lu 24:27
Lu 24:45
Lu 24:32
Ac 17:2
Ac 18:28
Ezr 7:10
De 31:9-13
De 4:1-2,5-14,40,44-45

Importance of Reading

1 Ti 4:13
Re 1:3
Isa 34:16
1 Ki 8:56
De 17:18-20
1 Th 5:27
De 6:6-9
Jos 1:8
Isa 8:20
Heb 4:12
Mal 3:16
Re 20:12
Joh 12:48
Ex 32:32-33
Ps 69:28
Re 3:5
Php 4:3
Da 12:1
Re 17:8
Re 13:8
Re 21:27
Re 20:15
Joh 5:39
Jer 30:2
Da 9:2
Isa 30:8
Isa 40:8
1 Pe 1:25
1 Ch 16:15
Ps 105:8
Mr 13:31
Mt 24:35
Ps 119:160
Pr 30:5

(continued)

Ps 119:140
Ps 12:6
Ec 12:10
Re 1:19
Re 19:9
Re 1:11
Ga 1:20
Jos 8:30-35
Ps 147:18
De 29:9
Ex 34:27
De 9:10
De 29:1
De 31:9-13
2 Ki 17:37
De 28:57-58
De 30:9-10
Jos 23:6
Jos 24:26
1 Ki 2:3
De 8:3
Jer 25:13
Ga 3:10
De 27:26
Ex 24:7-8
Heb 19:20
De 31:26-27
De 4:13
Zec 1:6
1 Ch 9:1
Jer 36:6
2 Ki 23:21
Re 22:9
De 29:20
Jer 36:8
Mt 4:4
Lu 4:4
Mt 22:29
Mr 12:24
Joh 5:47
Lu 16:31
Ac 18:28
Lu 9:26
Mr 8:38
1 Sa 10:25
Ps 19:7
Ne 7:5
Joh 8:31

Reading Purposes and Promises

De 30:9-11
De 31:26
Isa 30:8
De 28:57-58
De 17:19-20
Jos 1:8
De 29:9
1 Ki 2:1-4
Ex 17:14
Re 1:3
Re 22:7
2 Ti 2:15
1 Th 4:11
2 Ti 3:16
Ac 17:11
2 Ti 3:15
Ro 15:4
Pr 22:20
1 Jo 1:4
2 Co 2:9
1 Jo 2:1
Jude 1:3
Hab 2:2
Joh 20:30-31
Ex 34:27
2 Co 1:13
2 Pe 3:1-2
Joh 15:7
Isa 28:13
Heb 13:22
Ps 119:105
Ps 119:103,130
2 Th 3:14
Ps 119:162
Ps 119:161
2 Co 10:11
Es 1:20,22
Jer 32:12
De 29:29
Mr 8:38
Lu 9:26
1 Th 2:13
Es 3:14
1 Ti 1:4
2 Co 2:4
Joh 8:31

Effects of Reading

2 Ki 23:1-25
2 Ki 22:8-20
2 Ch 34:18-33
Ne 8:1-18
Ne 13:1-3
Jer 51:60-64
Da 5:7-31
Es 9
Eze 2:9-10; 3
Ac 15:23-29
Eze 37:15-22
Nu 5:11-31
Isa 29:11-14,18
Isa 37:14-38
Isa 38:9-22
Rev 5:7-8
Jer 45:1-5
Jer 36
Jer 29:1-29
Es 9:20-32
Ac 15:31
Ex 24:7-8
Ne 9:3
Ac 13:15
2 Ki 14:6
Jer 16:10
De 29:27
De 9:5
2 Ch 6:10
De 27:3
2 Ch 6:17
Joh 5:47
Ps 147:18
Ps 119:103,130
De 29:21
Jer 25:13
Jer 23:29
Ezr 2:62
Ne 7:63-64
Joh 8:31

Reading Difficulty

2 Pe 3:15-16
Mt 13:10-11,13-16
Lu 8:10
Isa 44:18
Joh 12:40
Ep 4:18
1 Co 2:14
2 Co 3:14-16
Jer 6:10

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Jer 8:9
Mr 7:13
Lu 16:29-31
Joh 5:47
Ho 8:12
2 Pe 1:20-21
Jer 11:8
Am 8:12
Joh 20:30
Joh 21:25
Jer 23:36
2 Co 2:17
Ac 8:30-31
Heb 4:2
Isa 8:20
Da 12:4
Isa 29:11-12
Mt 22:29
Mr 12:24
Joh 20:9
Re 5:4
Joh 5:38

Language and Words

Ge 11:1,6,7,9
Zep 3:9
Ac 2:6
Ps 119:130
Pr 1:2
Ec 12:10
1 Co 14:9
Hab 2:2
Ps 12:6
Pr 30:5
Joh 6:63
Job 6:25

Reading Comprehension

Mr 13:14
Mt 24:15
Eph 3:4
Da 9:2
Ac 17:11
1 Th 2:13
Jos 1:8
Ps 119:148
Heb 4:2
Ps 119:130
Pr 3:13

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Pr 16:22
Pr 2:2
Pr 29:5
Pr 1:2
Pr 3:5
1 Co 2:9-16
Job 32:8
Col 1:9
Job 38:36
1 Co 12:8
Eph 1:18
Lu 24:32,45
Joh 6:63
1 Ch 28:19
Ps 119:169
De 29:4
Jer 31:33
Heb 8:10
Heb 10:16
2 Co 3:2
Pr 7:3
Jer 17:1
Re 10:8-10
Eze 2:9, 3:3
Ps 119:103
2 Co 3:2-3
2 Pe 3:15-16
Joh 5:38

Readiness

Ac 17:11
2 Co 8:11
Es 3:14
Isa 28:10
Ps 10:17
Job 11:13
1 Ch 29:18
2 Ch 20:33
2 Co 9:3-4
Re 5:2,4,9,12
Heb 4:2
Es 8:13
1 Th 2:13
Joh 20:9
Mr 12:24
Mt 22:29
Joh 5:47
Pr 28:5

Methods

Heb 5:12-14
Isa 28:10
Jer 36:17,18
Jer 23:18
Pr 2:2

Research, Writing Publication

Ec 12:12
Ec 1:18
2 Ti 3:7
1 Th 5:21
Ga 6:4
2 Co 9:13
De 27:8
Re 1:19
Re 19:9
Re 21:5
Jos 8:32
De 31:9
Ex 31:18
De 5:22
Ex 32:15-16
Ex 34:1
Ex 34:28
De 9:10
De 10:2
Ex 24:4,7,8
De 17:18
Ex 31:18
De 27:2-3
De 31:24
Jos 24:26
Pr 7:3
Jer 17:1
2 Cor 3:2-3
Job 19:23-24
1 Jo 2:13
Re 1:11
Mal 3:16
Jer 36:32
Jer 36:2
1 Jo 2:7
Jer 36:17-18
Jer 36:4
Jer 30:2
Heb 10:16
Heb 8:10
Jer 31:33
Isa 30:8
De 4:13
2 Ch 36:22
Joh 19:22

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Jer 50:2
Isa 52:7
Na 1:15
Mr 13:10
Ps 26:7
De 32:3
Isa 2:3
Es 8:13
Es 3:14
Es 1:20,22
Mr 7:36
Mr 5:20
Mr 1:45
Am 4:5
Jer 31:7
Ps 147:18
Ps 68:11
Ps 147:15
Ac 10:37
Ac 13:49
Mic 4:2
Job 31:35
Ex 39:30
Eze 43:11

Readability

Hab 2:2
De 27:8
1 Co 14:9

Reading and Christ

Lu 10:26
Lu 4:16-21
Lu 4:1-13
Mt 4:1-11
Joh 5:46-47
Lu 3:4-6
Mr 1:2-3
Mt 11:10
Mt 21:13
Mt 26:24
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Mr 7:6
Mr 9:12
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Mt 24:15
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Mt 22:31-32
Mt 21:42
Mt 21:16

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Mt 12:1-5
Mt 21:42
Mr 2:23-28
Lu 6:1-5
Lu 24:44
Lu 24:45
Mt 22:23-33
Mr 12:18-27
Joh 21:24-25
Joh 5:39
Joh 20:30-31
Joh 15:25
Mt 24:35
Lu 21:33
Mr 13:31
Lu 9:26
Joh 6:63
Joh 12:48
Joh 8:31
Joh 5:38

Censorship and Related

De 4:2
Re 22:18-19
Ezr 6:11
Ac 19:19
Jer 36:27
Jer 36:23-32
Ex 32:32-33
De 29:20
Ps 69:28
Da 12:1,4,9
Re 22:10
Isa 29:11
Pr 30:6
De 12:32
Re 10:4
Es 8:8
Re 3:5